BCPharmaCare Newsletter *June 27, 2008 Edition 08-007*

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EXPANDED COVERAGE OF BIOLOGICS FOR RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

Abatacept and rituximab to be available as Limited Coverage Drugs through the PharmaCare Special Authority Program

Pharmaceutical Services Division is pleased to announce that, effective **June 30, 2008**, abatacept (Orencia®) and rituximab (Rituxan®) are eligible for PharmaCare coverage through our Special Authority Program for treatment of severely active rheumatoid arthritis, in combination with methotrexate, for patients who:

- have not responded to a trial of etanercept plus either adalimumab or infliximab, or
- have contraindications to anti-TNF agents.

All requests must be submitted by a rheumatologist. All criteria and the following forms are available in the Special Authority section of our website at www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme/.

- HLTH 5345—Adalimumab/Etanercept/Infliximab & Abatacept/Rituximab—Initial Coverage or Switching
- HLTH 5373—Abatacept/Rituximab—Coverage Renewal

Please note that Special Authority coverage cannot be provided retroactively and that actual coverage is subject to the patient's usual PharmaCare plan rules, including any annual deductible requirement.

**The use of PharmaNet is not intended as a substitute for professional judgment.
Information on PharmaNet is not exhaustive and cannot be relied upon as complete.
The absence of a warning about a drug or drug combination is not an indication that the drug or drug combination is safe, appropriate or effective in any given patient.
Health care professionals should confirm information obtained from PharmaNet, and ensure no additional relevant information exists, before making patient care decisions.**

PHARMACARE WEB NOTES

Available now—Search feature for Drug Review Results

The results of PharmaCare drug reviews (available at www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme/formulary/) can now be searched by brand name, generic name, company name or indication.

Coming in July...

Early in July, our website will sport a fresh new face.

Behind the scenes, we're working on a complete re-design of the website, but in the interim, we are:

- simplifying the home page menu and Fair PharmaCare content
- adding dedicated index pages for various health professionals, including pharmacists.

We hope the new menu and index page will help you to find the information you need more quickly.

We invite you to visit the website during July and send your suggestions for additions to the index page to pharma@gov.bc.ca. Your comments will also help us in our long-term website re-design project.

Correct Quantities for Claims

A detailed list of the correct quantities to use when submitting claims is always available on the PharmaCare website (www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme).

The list includes many commonly prescribed injectable medications and other products. A recent addition to the list was the correct claims quantity for vancomycin (# of 1 gram vials).

Is there a specific product you would like to see added to this list? Send your request to pharma@gov.bc.ca.

UPDATE RE OLANZAPINE TABLET COVERAGE

In December 2007, Pharmaceutical Services Division (PSD) issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to supply olanzapine tablets for PharmaCare beneficiaries. The RFP was issued to Eli Lilly Canada and Novopharm as the two manufacturers that were licensed by Health Canada to market olanzapine at that time.

Eli Lilly was selected as the successful proponent and PSD has entered into a listing agreement with Eli Lilly for olanzapine (Zyprexa®) 2.5 mg, 5 mg, 7.5 mg, 10 mg and 15 mg tablets (DINs 02229250, 02229269, 02229277, 02229285 and 02238850).

Under the Agreement, PharmaCare will continue to cover the Zyprexa® tablets listed above as Limited Coverage Drugs, subject to the established Special Authority criteria. Actual coverage is subject to the patient's usual PharmaCare plan rules, including any deductible requirement.

PharmaCare will not cover olanzapine tablets marketed by other vendors except in individual cases of documented intolerance to the Eli Lilly product. In such cases, the patient's physician can submit a Special Authority request for coverage of an alternative product.

In order to address concerns regarding supply disruption and/or inventory levels, Pharmaceutical Services will provide stakeholders with reasonable advance notice of any planned change in coverage for olanzapine tablets.

FAIR PHARMACARE—INCREASED ASSISTANCE AND PAYMENT OPTIONS

The Fair PharmaCare plan was designed to be responsive to the needs of individual families.

Decrease in income—Fair PharmaCare assistance is based on a family's net income from two years ago. As a result, individuals or families who experience loss of income can find it hard to meet their deductible.

Fair PharmaCare offers increased assistance if a family's net income has decreased by 10% or more in the past year.

Help with costs early in the year—We also offer a *Monthly Deductible Payment Option* for those who find it difficult to pay their prescription costs early in the year. Those who enrol in the option pay their annual deductible in equal instalments throughout the year and receive PharmaCare assistance with their prescription costs right away.

For more information, patients can:

- read the Fair PharmaCare brochure
- visit our website at www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme, or
- call Health Insurance BC.

A decrease in income is not the only situation in which a family may qualify for increased assistance.

For instance, Adele and Bob receive Fair PharmaCare assistance based on their combined net income. This year, Bob had to move into residential care. His drug expenses are automatically fully covered under PharmaCare's Plan B. However, Adele's Fair PharmaCare assistance is still based on their combined income, making it unlikely she will receive help with her prescription costs.

Adele may qualify to have her husband's income excluded. If Adele meets the criteria, her Fair PharmaCare coverage could be recalculated based on her income alone.

A call to Health Insurance BC could help Adele manage her prescription costs.

SPECIAL SERVICES FEES

The number of Special Services fees that PharmaCare paid over the past twelve months are:

May 2008	2,696	Nov 2007	3,782
Apr 2008	2,656	Oct 2007	3,747
Mar 2008	2,242	Sep 2007	3,091
Feb 2008	2,241	Aug 2007	3,110
Jan 2008	2,393	Jul 2007	3,073
Dec 2007	3,623	Jun 2007	3,200